



# STATE SENATOR ED CHARBONNEAU

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## SEN. ED CHARBONNEAU

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### Fellow Taxpayers:

Please know that I cut costs and saved valuable tax dollars on this important mailing to you by reducing its size and posting additional info on my Web site.

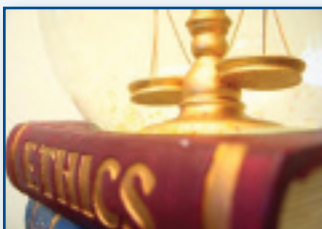
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## ETHICS REFORMS

Lawmakers proactively passed a comprehensive ethics reform package aimed at improving transparency in government and providing greater accountability over state leaders.

House Enrolled Act 1001 creates a one-year cooling off period before a retired legislator could become a lobbyist and requires uniform reporting by all lobbyists. The measure further reduces the threshold for reported one-time lobbyist expenses from \$100 to \$50 a day and drops the annual total from \$500 to \$250.



Reforms include expanding registration and reporting requirements for legislative liaisons of state agencies and universities. The law prohibits statewide officeholders, other than the governor, from appearing or using their name in advertisements funded with state-appropriated dollars, unless approved by a budgetary oversight committee. Also, statewide officeholders and statewide candidates are barred from campaign fundraising during budget-writing sessions.

## AG ASSESSMENTS

Lawmakers approved a measure I co-authored aimed at stabilizing Indiana's agricultural property assessments that farmers say are currently unfair. State figures show farmers are experiencing unanticipated "peaks and valleys" in farmland assessments based on an experimental formula crafted in 2006. Economists attribute the fluctuations in-part to speculation about alternative energy sources like ethanol, bio-diesel, biomass and wind as well as economic corrections due to

the national recession, food and energy markets.

Senate Enrolled Act 396, supported by the Indiana Farm Bureau, will use an adjusted rolling average that eliminates the highest assessed value over a six-year period. Known by economists as the "Modified Olympic Average" technique, the model should provide farmers and local governments more stable agricultural property assessments and be more representative of true market value.





# SEN. ED CHARBONNEAU

SERVING SENATE DISTRICT 5 TAXPAYERS



## **JOBS:** LAWMAKERS FIGHT NEW SPENDING, NEW TAXES; PASS PRO-JOBS INITIATIVES TO HELP HOOSIERS

**W**ith little time and no money, lawmakers worked this short session to maintain Indiana's pro-job climate of low taxes and limited regulation.

Senators kept a close, careful eye on proposed legislation and amendments to avoid new state expenditures and government intervention that would have raised taxes and imposed red tape during already hard times for Indiana's workforce and employers.

Gov. Mitch Daniels, with the support of Senate Republicans, rightly reacted to tumbling state revenues by cutting government spending, flat-lining state payrolls and freezing all but essential hiring. To date, state bureaucracies have cut 20 percent from operating budgets. Reluctantly, higher education funding has been reduced 6 percent and public K-12 schools – nearly half of the state budget – have been asked to find 3 percent in new cost savings and efficiencies to help save classroom teachers' jobs.

Senators also successfully delayed \$400 million in new unemployment insurance premiums from going into effect in 2010. By avoiding premium increases, lawmakers hope employers large and small will be in stronger positions to retain or add employees.

Senators also approved legislation I authored allowing for public-private partnerships to be used to complete two major highway

construction projects in the state – the proposed Illiana Expressway in northwest Indiana and the Ohio River Bridges Project along the border with Kentucky. The legislation opens the door for tremendous job creation and economic development surrounding the projects.

Lawmakers also passed initiatives to help Hoosiers recover from the national recession:

- **New Employer Tax Credits** will be offered to businesses relocating or incorporating in Indiana. Qualified businesses must hire 10 or more full-time employees, not including owners.

- **Small Business Tax Credits** will be expanded to make small employers with fewer than 35 workers eligible for Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) credits.

- **Small Business Ombudsman** will be an advocate for small employers with state agencies, helping navigate regulations, streamline paperwork and coordinate due dates. Also, the ombudsman will monitor outdated, ineffective and overly burdensome reporting requests and red tape.

- **H.I.R.E.** (Helping Indiana Re-start Employment) initiative will offer tax incentives to employers who hire and train unemployed and underemployed Hoosiers.



## Lawmakers Give Schools Funding Flexibility, More Local Control

**L**awmakers this session provided schools more financial flexibility and local control. We also took steps to address social promotion of students not reading at grade level.

Giving local school corporations greater ability to address funding challenges and meet the educational needs of Hoosier students are key goals of House Enrolled Act 1367.

Under this new law, schools can claim up to 5 percent of funding normally dedicated to capital projects and use it for instructional purposes. Schools agreeing to pay freezes for staff, with exceptions for built-in raises based on experience and new degrees, can use up to 10 percent.

This measure will provide access to nearly \$82 million statewide to help prevent teacher layoffs and preserve instruc-

tional programs. By allowing them to tap into these funds, HEA 1367 helps schools address budget cuts and avoid new taxes on Hoosiers.

This legislation also requires schools to develop a plan to protect instructional programs, including provisions for students who are deficient in reading. Input will be sought through public hearings.

To avoid additional costs and provide more local control, Senate Enrolled Act 309 gives schools the option to continue budgeting on a January 1 – December 31 calendar or change to the state's fiscal July 1 – June 30 calendar. Without this new flexibility, many schools would have to pay for more training and equipment during already difficult financial times.

